

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing Of Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for processing featured content on a client computer, the client computer having an operating system, the operating system including a system registry, the system registry containing information about computer configuration that the operating system continuously references during operation, the information including the applications installed on the computer, the types of documents creatable by the applications, the properties of folders and program icons, and the hardware configuration, the method comprising:

generating a signal indicating a successful boot of a software application;

generating, upon receipt of the signal indicating a successful boot of a software application without user input, a database query for featured content items, the featured content items having information focused on a specific topic, wherein the query comprises an identifier related to a particular topic, and wherein the featured content items forming the data set have at least one database attribute that is associated with the identifier, wherein each featured content item is associated with a plurality of database attributes including a priority status field;

receiving featured content items in response to the database query;

storing the featured content items in a local memory;

selecting a predetermined number of featured content items from the featured content items stored in the local memory;

storing the selected featured content items in the system registry;

in response to receiving a command from the software application to display at least one featured content item, wherein the command to display at least one featured content item is invoked during the boot process of a calling software application without user input, wherein user input includes pointer device movement, retrieving featured content items stored in the system registry and displaying the featured content items on a graphical user interface.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the featured content items contain hyperlinks and text data associated with the hyperlinks.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein selecting a predetermined number of featured content items includes randomly selecting three featured content items from the featured content items stored in the local memory.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the method further comprises:

determining if at least one featured content item is stored in the system registry;

if no featured content items are stored in the system registry, selecting a predetermined number of default items from a list of default items stored in the local memory, wherein selecting a predetermined number of featured content items includes

randomly selecting three featured content items from the featured content items stored in the local memory; and

displaying the data of the default items on a graphical user interface.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the displayed featured content items provide instruction for operating a software application.

6. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the displayed featured content items include data that form an example search string, wherein the example search string is displayed on the graphical user interface with a text entry field for receiving search strings.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled) ~~The method of Claim 1, wherein the query comprises an identifier related to a particular topic, and wherein the featured content items forming the data set have at least one database attribute that is associated with the identifier.~~

9. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~[[8]]~~ 1, wherein the identifier is associated with at least one computer software application.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the method further comprises:

determining if individual featured content items are out of date; and

if individual featured content items are out of date, removing the individual featured content items from the local memory.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the query is configured with a database attribute to filter featured content items based on a value indicative of a rating associated with an individual featured content item.

12. (Original) A computer-readable medium containing computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, perform the method of any one of Claims 1-11.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method of displaying featured content items in a hypertext document, the featured content items having information focused on a specific topic, the method comprises:

in response to receiving a request for a hypertext document containing information that describes a topic, generating, without user input, a database query for a number of featured content items, wherein the query is configured by parsing the data contained in the hypertext document to determine one or more identifiers associated with the topic;

receiving featured content items in response to the database query;

determining if the number of received featured content items is greater than a predetermined number of featured content items;

if the number of received featured content items is greater than the predetermined number of featured content items, formatting said hypertext document to include at least one featured content item for display, the hypertext document being

formatted to display the data of the featured content item with the contents of the hypertext document; and

if the number of received featured content items is not greater than the predetermined number of featured content items, formatting said hypertext document without including the featured content items.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein the method further comprises, formatting said hypertext document without the featured content items if the number of received featured content items is not greater than the predetermined number of featured content items.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein the method further comprises:

determining if one or more of the featured content items has a priority status;

if one or more of the featured content items has a priority status, selecting a predetermined number of featured content items having a priority status for display; and

formatting said hypertext document to include said selected predetermined number of featured content items having a priority status, the hypertext document being formatted to display the selected number of featured content items having a priority status with the contents of the hypertext document.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein the query is configured with a database attribute to filter featured content items based on a value indicative of a rating associated with an individual featured content item.

18. (Original) A computer-readable medium containing computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, perform the method of any one of Claims 14-17.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously Presented) A method for updating a database of featured content items, the featured content items having information focused on a specific topic, each featured content item of the database including an attribute that indicates if the featured content item is of interest or not of interest, wherein the method comprises:

determining, without user input, if a featured content item has expired;

determining, without user input, if the featured content item is highly rated by a user;

if the featured content item has expired, modifying the attribute to indicate that the featured content item is not of interest; and

if the featured content item has not expired and if the featured content item is highly rated, modifying the attribute to indicate that the featured content item is of interest.

21. (Original) The method of Claim 20, wherein the method further comprises:

determining if the featured content item is new; and

if the featured content item has not expired and if the featured content item is new, modifying the attribute to indicate that the featured content item is of interest.

22. (Original) The method of Claim 20, wherein the method further comprises:

determining if the featured content item has been displayed more than a predetermined number of times; and

if the featured content item has not expired and if the featured content item has been displayed more than a predetermined number of times, modifying the attribute to indicate that the featured content item is of interest.

23. (Original) A computer-readable medium containing computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, perform the method of any one of Claims 20-22.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method for processing featured content on a client computer, the client computer having an operating system, the operating system including a system registry, the system registry containing information about computer configuration that the operating system continuously references during operation, the information including the user profiles, the applications installed on the computer, the types of documents creatable by the applications, the properties of folders and program icons, and the hardware configuration, the method comprising:

determining if at least one featured content item is stored in the system registry;

if no featured content items are stored in the system registry, selecting a predetermined number of default items from a list of default items stored in memory and displaying the data of the default items on a graphical user interface;

if a featured content item is stored in the system registry, retrieving the featured content item from the system registry and displaying the featured content item on the graphical user interface;

determining if the client computer is connected to a computer network;

if the client computer is connected to a computer network, generating, without user input, a database query for featured content items, the featured content items having information focused on a specific topic;

receiving featured content items in response to the database query;

storing the featured content items in a local memory;

selecting a predetermined number of featured content items from the featured content items stored in the system registry;

storing the selected featured content items in the system registry;

in response to receiving a command from a software application to display at least one featured content item, without user input, retrieving featured content items stored in the system registry and displaying the featured content items on the graphical user interface;

if the client computer is not connected to a computer network, registering a callback request with a network status application program interface to be notified when the network status application program interface determines that the client computer is connected to the computer network;

determining if there are any up-to-date featured content items stored in the local memory;

if an up-to-date featured content item is stored in the local memory, storing the up-to-date featured content item in the system registry; and

if no up-to-date featured content items stored in the local memory, removing the featured content items from the local memory.